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MAINTAINING STABILITY AND PATIENCE IN TOUGH TIMES

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One commentator writes: "When George Washington's army defeated the British General Charles Cornwallis at Yorktown, the end of the Revolutionary War began. Winning the war didn't automatically end the problems that the colonies faced. Things became so bad economically that one of George Washington's colonels wrote Washington a secret letter, urging him to use his army to make himself king or dictator. To the colonel, this was the only way to get the affairs of the young nation under control. Washington rejected the plan, but with his popularity and power he probably could have become king if he had so desired."

When we think of resiliency, the focus is often on ourselves. And of course, we all need to prepare ourselves for an uncertain future. Preparing for tomorrow is one of today's duties. As George Washington faced his future, he had many choices to make. The victory at Yorktown was in many ways just a beginning for Washington. He was placed in the unique position of choosing whether or not to take on the leadership of a new country. He had to choose what type of leadership style to assume. But he also embodied the Army value we call "selfless service." Instead of taking leadership by force, he led by example. Instead of trying to rule, he served. And because of that we call him the father of our country.

In the Old Testament portion of the Bible, the book of Judges is about military leaders that served their country in times of war. In Judges, chapter 6, we meet a man named Gideon that helps us to see what selfless service is all about. From the moment God called him to serve, Gideon took on each new task regardless of personal danger. He was challenged in his decisions by his family, his neighbors, his fellow service members, and the enemy. He sometimes had extremely limited resources. Does all this sound familiar? Gideon had his failures, he had his struggles, but each time he moved forward and accomplished what was required. And as a result, his country was victorious.

How did Gideon maintain stability? How did he keep going when it got tough? He remembered who had his back - "The LORD is with you, mighty warrior" (Judges 6:12). Gideon could serve his country knowing that he was doing the right thing. He had been placed in his position by God Himself. When we think of our role, our situation in life, we can rely on the One who placed us there. We can look to the One who is with us wherever we go.